THE STATE LIBRARY
Washington
Secretary of State
SAM REED

GRANTS

Virtual Reference Service Demonstration Projects 2003 Application Guidelines

This grant cycle is supported with Library Services and Technology Act funding provided by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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1. Introduction

In this information-based society, information needs are increasing exponentially. Transmitting information electronically is rapid and relatively inexpensive. The move to electronic formats – in some cases with the loss of a print version – means that libraries must acquire and provide virtual reference services of all types. Essential to the optimal use of electronic databases, such as those offered through the Statewide Database Licensing project, is the ability to provide e-mail and online interaction with the users of such services. The mediation of the librarian remains a vital component to providing access to electronically delivered information.

The Virtual Reference Service (VRS) initiative has received Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds to implement project activities focused on the development of best practices, methods, and standards for creating virtual reference services in Washington State libraries. This project will be developed in coordination with libraries/citizens of the state, providing a demonstration of best practices to support wide availability of electronic reference and the opportunity for cost savings to all involved.

The goals of the Virtual Reference Service Initiative are:

- To provide access to a range of electronic reference services with which all Washingtonians can address their informational and educational needs;

- To develop a leadership model to support virtual reference in Washington libraries;

- To develop best practices in VRS;

- To realize significant cost savings for Washington libraries through cooperative VRS development and testing of best practices;

●   To extend Washington library service hours to all Washingtonians.

2. Library Eligibility
All types of libraries are eligible to apply for this grant cycle subject to LSTA eligibility guidelines. LSTA eligibility guidelines may be reviewed at: http://www.statelib.wa.gov/libraries/lsta/eligibility.aspx.   A copy of these guidelines may be requested by contacting Washington State Library staff as listed below.

3. Project Eligibility
The purpose of this grant cycle is to provide demonstration project grant funds to libraries to research and test methods to establish best practices and standards in VRS. Eligible projects may explore one or more of the activities on the following list. The list is not exhaustive, but is intended to generate ideas.

●   Providing a tiered or triage structure for reference via e-mail or online forms;

●   Testing software applications that support interactive online reference, such as chat, instant messaging and escorted web-browsing;

●   Testing e-mail management software for distributed reference service;

●   Testing call center bridge software for handling telephone and online queries via a single answer line;

●   Testing software applications and peripheral devices that support additional delivery formats, such as Voice over IP, images via WebCam, and other evolving technology;

●   Identifying, organizing, and assessing an optimal combination of online and print resources for the provision of VRS;

●   Testing best practices and methods for equitably sharing databases in collaborative reference service, including authentication procedures;

●   Developing cooperative homework help services;

●   Developing online tools and techniques for patron self-help in using VRS;

●   Developing methods for evaluating customer satisfaction with VRS

●   Providing multilingual support for VRS;

●   Exploring the establishment of a multi-type consortium for VRS among Washington libraries;

●   Extending hours of service and sharing staffing for a collaborative VRS;

●   Exploring information literacy applications through VRS;

●   Developing and implementing marketing strategies and techniques for VRS.

This is a competitive grant cycle. Libraries that meet the criteria listed below are invited to submit applications that will be reviewed and scored. In order to be eligible for the maximum number of points, libraries are encouraged to partner with libraries that currently offer digital reference service or establish other partnerships to develop and test VRS practices. As a demonstration project intended to research and test methods to establish best practices and standards in VRS, participating libraries will need to include a substantial component within their proposed project related to evaluation of the project and reporting results and outcomes, both expected and unexpected. In addition to this report, applicants are expected to provide the name or title of a staff member who can respond to requests for information about the project, and will, if asked, participate in activities that further the overall goals of VRS. These include

providing usage statistics, assisting the preparation of presentations, publishing or distributing project information, reporting on marketing and/or promotional efforts, and similar sharing of results with the Washington library community.

Stand-alone projects are eligible for funding although cooperative projects are eligible to receive additional points in the application review process. Cooperative projects are defined as those involving one or more independent library organizations (i.e., not branches or service outlets of the same library system).

Libraries that received a previous demonstration project grant for VRS may re-apply.

Please check the project Web site for details on 2002 grant demonstration projects: http://www.statelib.wa.gov/libraries/projects/virtualref/grants.aspx. Examples of successful past proposals are available on the Web site in Word document format.

Links to Web sites of Washington libraries that currently offer VRS are provided on contact page of the project Web site: http://www.statelib.wa.gov/libraries/projects/virtualref/links.aspx.

Criteria
- The VRS program or service you propose will be new to your library or it will expand or enhance an existing VRS program or service. (Federal funds may not substitute for local funds.)

- Your library will use current research on VRS as the basis for program or service. For an introduction and more information on this research, see the VRS Web site at http://www.statelib.wa.gov/libraries/projects/virtualRef/.

- Your library is encouraged to have one or more partners who will help develop and implement the VRS programs or services, both during the grant period and beyond should the program or service prove successful and be continued.

- Library staff and partners will participate in data-gathering and evaluation efforts related to this grant cycle. Library staff and partners will be willing to share their experiences with other libraries in Washington State and beyond. This will include submission of detailed project reports to the Washington State Library as well as potentially contributing to conference programs, posting evaluations to their library Web site, and developing articles for publication in appropriate library journals.

4. Funding Available
Overall funding to support this grant cycle is $150,000. This grant cycle has a limit of $30,000 per project. A local match is preferred, but not required. It is anticipated that five to eight applicants may receive awards. Hardware funding is limited to no more than $10,000. Awards will be made contingent upon receipt of federal funds and distribution of those funds by the Washington State Library, a division of the Office of Secretary of State.

5. Timeframe
The following timeline has been developed for the purpose of providing information about this grant cycle and to assist applicants in developing appropriate projects and applications.

Tentative dates
- March 31, 2003 – Grant cycle opens

- May 30, 2003 – Applications must be received by 5 p.m. at the Washington State Library

- July 14, 2003 – Anticipated date for awards by the Washington State Library

- August 29, 2003 – Contracts are fully executed, project implementation can begin. Project period is from the date of contract execution, anticipated to be no later than August 29, 2003, through August 31, 2004.

- August 31, 2004 – All contractual activity leading to project completion ends. Applicants proposing projects that use LSTA funding beyond August 31, 2004, will not be considered for this funding cycle.

- October 15, 2004 – Final reports and final reimbursement claims are submitted

6. Application Process

Grant cycle opens on March 31, 2003. An announcement of the grant cycle is sent via mail to library directors, listserv, and to those who have requested to be notified of this grant cycle.

Application guidelines, forms, and other materials may be obtained by visiting the Washington State Library Web site and printing appropriate web pages or downloading Word97 files. Materials may also be obtained by contacting the Grants Program staff as noted below.

General questions regarding the application process may be obtained by contacting the VRS Project Coordinator or the Grants Program staff by e-mail or phone. These staff will not be involved in rating and scoring applications. Staffing limitations preclude review and comment on draft applications.

Deadline for funding proposals:

Applications must be received at the Washington State Library by **5 p.m. Friday, May 30, 2003**. Faxed applications are **NOT** acceptable for this funding request. An application consists of one, single-sided signed original and one copy, clearly identifying the original. In addition, a copy of the application on 3.5 inch DOS formatted diskette or sent by e-mail is requested. Submit applications to the address below:

By Mail	*By Hand or Delivered*
Grants Program	*Grants Program*
Washington State Library	*Washington State Library*
PO Box 42460	*6880 Capitol Blvd S*
Olympia, Washington 98504-2460	*Tumwater WA 98501-5513*

A review committee selected by the Washington State Library (WSL) will review the applications and forward recommendations to the State Librarian and the Secretary of State for final consideration and approval. Consideration will be made for a variety of projects that represent diverse geographic regions, types of libraries, and aspects of service. WSL may contact the applicant for clarification of information. Funds are distributed by application rank order within the funding capabilities.

After award of funding, a letter of notification will be sent to all applicants. Contracts will then be established with those receiving awards. Reimbursable project costs may not be incurred until contracts are fully signed by both the Office of Secretary of State (Washington State Library) and the award recipient. Costs incurred prior to contract execution are not reimbursable.

7. Requirements

a) Libraries are sometimes granted funds contingent upon fulfilling one or more requirements prior to project implementation. Libraries must meet those contingencies before Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds can be disbursed.

b) The project period is from the date of contract execution (i.e., the contracting authority from both the Washington State Library and the sub-grantee have signed the contract) through the end of the period of performance noted within the contract. Project costs incurred prior to contract execution or after the end of the period of performance specified within the contract are the responsibility of the applicant/sub-grantee.

c) Libraries must expend local money first and then claim reimbursement. Funds will not be distributed in advance of activities and purchases taking place. Funds will only be distributed on a reimbursement basis. Funds requested for the proposed project must not take the place of local funds.

d) Applicant/sub-grantee overhead expenses and administrative costs are not eligible for LSTA reimbursement. These costs may be used as match for the proposed project.

e) Applicants must commit to compliance with grant administration requirements. Quarterly progress reports will be submitted to the Washington State Library (WSL) detailing activities performed or in progress toward the successful completion of the project. A final report will be submitted to WSL providing a complete summary of the project and of all grant activities. The contract document will indicate the latest date for submission of required quarterly and final reports. Reimbursement claims will be made on forms provided by WSL. Documentation of expenses will be required.

As part of the evaluation and reporting for the project, the final report will be expected to be detailed enough to enable another library to replicate the project. The report should include:
- A description of the project and the steps taken to implement it.
- What was actually accomplished?
- Lessons learned (What worked well. What should be done differently if the project is repeated.)
- Did the project achieve its stated goals? Why or why not?
- Steps taken to evaluate the project. A summary of the response to the project from project partners, customers, and others.
- A statement indicating how project results contribute to the overall goal of statewide VRS.
- Will the project continue and if so, how will it be funded?
- A staff position/contact who can respond to requests for information about the project.

f) Applicants must commit to participate in statistical information gathering and other surveys measuring the effectiveness of this proposal.

g) **Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA): New Certification Required**
Any public elementary or secondary school library submitting an application for LSTA funding is required to file a certification form regarding compliance with CIPA requirements. If the application is from a group of libraries or a library consortium, the lead library applicant must collect and retain the certification from every constituent public elementary or secondary school library and submit an overall certification on behalf of the group. Please see the State Library's web page for LSTA grants for background information and copies of the appropriate CIPA forms: http://www.statelib.wa.gov/libraries/libDev/cipa.aspx .

h) The Washington State Library and the Institute of Museum and Library Services must be acknowledged as providing LSTA funding to support the project in all project-related public events, press releases, printed materials, and Web sites.

i) All projects and activities must be completed and funds expended by August 31, 2004. Applicants proposing projects that will use LSTA funding beyond August 31, 2004 will not be considered for this grant cycle.

8. Assurances

The Washington State Library and the Sub-Grantee agree that all activity pursuant to a Grant Agreement will be in accordance with all applicable, current or future federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations. Specifically, this includes laws, rules and regulations such as:

a) 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1183, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements;
b) 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1185, Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Government Wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants);
c) Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-21 Revised, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions;
d) Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87 Revised, Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments;
e) Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations; and
f) Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133 Revised, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations.

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS (CFR)
The CFRs can be inspected by accessing the following URL:
http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/index.html. Scrolling down toward the bottom of this page is a box labeled "Search Terms". To inspect 45 CFR Part 1183, enter 45CFR1183 in this box and click on the "Submit" button. A search list is returned that includes specific parts, sections, and subsections of 45 CFR Part 1183. If you are interested in inspecting the full title, scroll to the bottom of the page. You will find one item titled: 45CFR1183-- PART 1183--UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. This item contains the full text of this title and is available as a text file (.txt) or as an Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) file. If you are interested in just a part of this overall title and you know the name for the specific section, such as Subawards to debarred and suspended parties, scroll to the title for that section.

The Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR Part 1183 includes sections related to the scope and applicability of the provisions, financial administration requirements, contract administration requirements, and close-out of projects.

The Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR Part 1185 provides that an individual, corporation, unit of government or other entity that is debarred or suspended shall be excluded from Federal financial or non-financial assistance and benefits under Federal programs and activities.

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB) CIRCULARS
The following OMB Circulars can be inspected by accessing the following URL:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/grants/index.html. Click on "Circulars". The specific circular of interest can then be selected.

OMB Circular A-21 Revised establishes principles for determining costs applicable to grants, contracts, and other agreements with educational institutions.

OMB Circular A-87 Revised establishes principles and standards for determining costs for Federal awards carried out through grants, cost reimbursement contracts, and other agreements with State and local governments and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments (governmental units).

OMB Circular A-122 Revised establishes principles for determining costs of grants, contracts and other agreements with non-profit organizations.

OMB Circular A-133 Revised is issued pursuant to the Single Audit Act of 1984, P.L. 98-502, and the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996, P.L. 104-156. It sets forth standards for obtaining consistency and uniformity among federal agencies for the audit of states, local governments, and non-profit organizations expending federal awards.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:
If the Sub-Grantee includes a construction component as part of the overall project even if this component is not funded by federal funds, the following shall also apply and includes laws, rules and regulations that are the provisions of 45 CFR 1183.36(i); including but not limited to:

a) Section 306 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 1857(h)), and section 508 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. part 15). Note: Applies to contracts, subcontracts, and sub-grants of amounts in excess of $100,000.

b) Mandatory standards and policies relating to energy efficiency which are contained in the State Energy Conservation Plan issued in compliance with the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (Pub. L. 94-163).

c) Compliance with the Copeland "Anti-Kickback" Act (18 U.S.C. 874) as supplemented in Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 3). Note: Applies to all contracts, grants, and sub-grants for construction or repair.

d) Compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C> 276a to a-7) as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 5). Note: Applies to construction contracts in excess of $2,000 awarded grantees and sub-grantees when required by Federal Grant Program legislation.

e) Compliance with sections 103 and 107 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 327-330) as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR part 5). Note: Applies to construction contracts awarded grantees and sub-grantees in excess of $2,000, and in excess of $2,500 for other contracts which involve employment of mechanics or laborers.

9. Additional Information
Projects must conform to LSTA goals and fit within the goals and objectives of LSTA planning documents. The following may be used to provide a basic overview of this information.

The Six Goals for LSTA State Program Funds
Under the federal Museum and Library Services Act of 1996 and Subtitle B, Library Services and Technology, funds may be used, in any proportion, by state library agencies directly, and through sub-grants or cooperative agreements to individual libraries for:

1. Establishing or enhancing electronic links among or between libraries

2. Electronically linking libraries with educational, social, or information services

3. Assisting libraries in accessing information through electronic networks

4. Encouraging libraries in different areas and encouraging different types of libraries, to establish consortia and share resources

5. Paying costs for libraries to acquire or share computer systems and telecommunications technologies

6. Targeting library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to under-served urban and rural communities, including children (from birth though age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line

This grant cycle focuses on 4. "Encouraging libraries in different areas and different types of libraries to establish consortia and share resources".

Overview of LSTA Five-Year Plan Goals for Library Service

Purpose
This funding supports the goals of the *Washington State Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year Plan FFY2003 – 2007*, July 26, 2002. A link to the LSTA Five-Year Plan may be found on the Washington State Library grants page,
http://www.statelib.wa.gov/libraries/lsta/LSTAPlan03.pdf

Goals
The LSTA Five-Year Plan contains four primary goals. They are:

1. Washingtonians will have increased physical and remote electronic access to traditional and digital library resources and services in all areas of the state.

2. Washingtonians will have increased awareness of the library resources, and services that are available to them.

3. Washington libraries will provide enhanced and expanded library services, resources and programs to all segments of their communities.

4. Through consulting, training, and collaboration, Washington libraries will have an increased capacity to effectively serve customers.

For Questions and Additional Information
Web site: http://www.statelib.wa.gov/lsta/grants.aspx
Buff Hirko, VRS Project Coordinator, 360.704.5206, bhirko@secstate.wa.gov
Jeff Martin, Grants Program, 360.704.5248, jmartin@secstate.wa.gov
Anne Yarbrough, Grants Program, 360.704.5246, ayarbrough@secstate.wa.gov